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HOUSEKEEPERS' CHAT Thursday, July 9, 1931

(NOT FOR PUBLICATION)

Subject: "Unwelcome Summer Visitors." Information from the Bureau of Entomology, U.S.D.A.

BULLETIN available: "House Ants," Kinds and Method of Control, Farmers' Bulletin 740.

Marian Lee sank down into the porch chair I offered her with a sigh of relief.

"Tired?" said she. "Did you ask me if I was tired, Aunt Sammy? I certainly ought to be weary and just plain tuckered out, as my grandmother used to say. Why? Because of all the visitors in my house."

"Why you never told me you were entertaining guests!"

"I should say I am entertaining guests, and unwelcome ones at that. I'm being a hostess against my will."

"Goodness me. Who are they? When did they arrive? And where did they come from?"

"They've been arriving little by little since summer started --- a few more every day until now they are driving me desperate. Where did they come from? I wish someone would tell me the answer to that question. If I knew I'd get rid of them."

"Please stop being bysterious and keeping me in suspense and tell me who in the world your visitors are."

"Can't you guess? They're ants, house ants. My kitchen and pantry are besciged by them, running back and forth. And I've found them in the bathroom, in the living room, in the bedrooms, in the hall. Oh, dearie me. Talk about annoying visitors, these are the worst yet. Do you suppose any other housekeeper has as many troubles as I do?"

"Lots of them seem to be having the same kind of visitors this season, if that's any comfort to you," I assured Marian Lee. "In the past week I've had at least ten letters inquiring how to get rid of ants or asking for the bulletin called House Ants."

"Please, Aunt Sammy, read me what that bulletin advises about destroying these visiting pests."

So I turned to page 12, and here is what the booklet says:

"The distinctively house-inhabiting ants, such as the little red ant, and other imported species, nesting in the woodwork, masonry, or articles of furniture, etc., are often very difficult to eradicate because of their inaccessibility. If the nest can be located by following the workers back to their point of disappearance, the inmates of the nest, if near by, may be reached by injecting a little disulphid of carbon, kerosene, or gasoline into the opening by means of an oil can or small syringe. In the use of these substances, naturally, take precautions to see that no fire is present, as all of them are inflammable. If the nest is under flooring, it may sometimes be reached by removing a section of the floor. But, as a rule, unless you can thus reach and destroy the colony other measures are of only temporary avail, if food and other conditions continue to attract the ants and facilitate their continued breeding in the house."

Please note that last fact, about food and other conditions that attract the ants.

"Removing material that invites these visitors is the first step in getting rid of them. Ants are attracted by food material --- especially cake, bread, sugar, meat and so on in pantries and elsewhere. The nuisance of their presence can be largely limited by promptly cleaning up all food scattered by children and by keeping all food supplies which may attract ants in ant-proof metal containers or in ice-boxes, and limiting the amount of such articles as far as possible to daily needs."

The bulletin goes on to discuss other ways of doing away with ants --- using repellents of different sorts along the ants' runways, or using poisoned baits. There is a great deal of information on those pages, well worth any housewife's reading.

There is also some advice about lawn ants, which sometimes get into the house and become nuisances. "In the case of lawn ants where only a small area with few nests if concerned," says the bulletin, "drenching the nests with boiling water or injecting a small quantity of kerosene oil will be effective, and similar treatment will apply to nests between or beneath paving stones. Another method is to spray the lawn with kerosene emulsion or with a very strong soap wash, prepared by dissolving any common laundry soap in water at the rate of from half a pound to a pound of soap in a gallon of water."

You may be interested to know that the Department of Agriculture issues bulletins telling how to get the better of almost every bug that bothers the housewife.

On our shelves we have leaflets not only on ants and cockroaches, but also on flies and fleas, moths and mosquitoes, carpet beetles, bedbugs, centipedes, and so forth. By reading these bulletins, you can obtain information on eradicating any of these pests, information straight from the scientiest who have spent years studying them.

There have been several letters about mosquitoes lately. And the other day a young nephew of mine called to ask about stopping the itch which he said was left by mosquitoes in lumps all over his legs.

The name of the mosquito bulletin is "Mosquito Remedies and Preventives." It describes the measures, substances and materials, both offensive and defensive, that have been found most effective against these tiny but serious enemies to our comfort and health. One short section takes up remedies for mosquito bites. According to the authors, the most satisfactory remedy known, from their personal experience, has been that very simple remedy --- moist soap. Wet the end of a piece of ordinary toilet soap and rub it gently on the puncture and the irritation will soon pass away. Other people, they say, enthusiastically recommend household ammonia, or alcohol or glycerin.

Tomorrow: "Frozen Desserts for Hot-Weather Meals."